

Remarks

Claims 1-7 were pending. Claims 3-6 have been withdrawn from consideration based on the previous election of 12/21/07. Claims 1, 2, and 7 are sought to be amended. Support for the amendments can be found in the specification, inter alia at page 15, lines 1-10, Fig. 5 and Figs. 7A-7C. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, and 7 are pending.

Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments. Based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and passage of the claims to allowance.

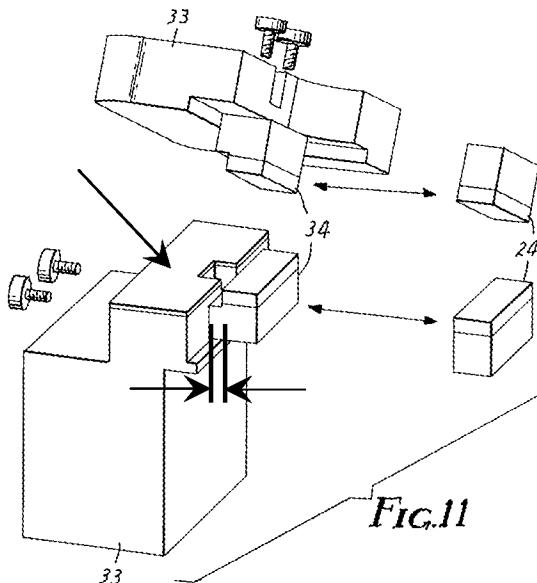
§ 102 Rejections

Claims 1, 2 and 7 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mansfield (US 5,838,850). Applicants respectfully traverse for the reasons specified below.

Applicants incorporate their remarks from the previous response dated June 30, 2008.

Applicants respectfully submit that Mansfield does not disclose the claimed invention. In summary, Mansfield discloses a cleaver with a completely different structure than what is being claimed by Applicants. Mansfield, particularly the description referred to by the Examiner, is directed at converting an existing Fujikura cleaver (see Mansfield Fig. 3A) from being a flat (square)-cleaver to a curved-angle cleaver. See Mansfield, col. 13, lines 15 et seq. In particular, the existing hammer is replaced by a new hammer 38 (see Mansfield, Fig. 10) and the existing clamping pads are replaced by new pads 34 (see Fig. 11, also reproduced below).

In the Office Action, it is remarked that the shims between 34 or 24 and 36 or 26 disclosed by Mansfield that are mounted on element 33 (Fig. 11) disclose the claimed “auxiliary support section.” Applicants respectfully disagree. Mansfield’s Fig. 11 is reproduced in annotated form below:



Applicants note that no shim is shown in the drawing, nor is any specific shim referred to in the text by an element number or other marking. If the Examiner believes that the structure (denoted by the single arrow) on top of base 33 is a shim, the Examiner is requested to make such a statement in a subsequent office action and to show evidence from the Mansfield text that such structure is a shim and meets the recited structure (for the record - Applicants do not believe that such structure is a shim or that one of ordinary skill in the art would view that surface as a shim). Even if, *arguendo*, such an unidentified structure was a shim, the Mansfield reference would still not teach Applicants' claimed structure, which includes an auxiliary support section that "... includes first and second auxiliary support sections provided on both sides of the blade section when in the operable position, said first and second auxiliary support sections includes a fiber support face locally located between said clamp sections separately from fiber clamping surface of the fiber clamping sections of the fiber clamping sections at said operable position...." The particular surface of Mansfield's cleaver is not provided on both sides of the blade section. See also, Mansfield Figs. 3A and 4 - the position of clamping pads 26 and 36 is the same.

Moreover, the present specification provides an illustration of this particular distinguishing feature. For example, see the exemplary embodiment in Applicants' application, particularly the embodiments of Figs. 1, 5, and 7A-7C, where the example auxiliary support structure 54/56 can be moved between operable and inoperable positions and can provide

support on both sides of the blade section 42 when in the operating position (see especially Fig. 7B).

In contrast, the Mansfield disclosure evidences a different structure. As shown in Mansfield's Fig. 11, clamping pad 34 is reversed "L" shaped and the clamping surface is shifted to right side in the drawing, as shown by double arrows in the annotated figure above. Because distance d3 is less than the distance d2 (Mansfield, col.13, line 45), the blade and clamping pads 36 or 26 are located on the right hand side of the Fig. 11. Only clamping pad 34 is shifted its position relative to the blade and the position of the clamping pad 36 remains the same. Moreover, Mansfield's col. 13, line 40-67 describes elements 34 or 24 and it is apparent from Mansfield's Fig 5 that only clamping pad 34 needs to be closer to the blade than the clamping pad 24.

Regarding claim 2, for at least the reasons above, Applicants respectfully submit that Mansfield does not disclose an auxiliary support section that includes "holdable areas formed adjacent to both of said first and second fiber support faces so as to be clamped by clamping surfaces of said clamp sections together with said unsheathed optical fiber." In particular, Mansfield does not disclose the claimed auxiliary support section structure.

Regarding claim 7, for at least the reasons above, Applicants respectfully submit that Mansfield does not disclose "providing an auxiliary support member separate from and movable relative to the clamp sections including a fiber support face capable of supporting an unsheathed optical fiber in cooperation with said clamp sections." In particular, Mansfield does not disclose the claimed auxiliary support member.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 7 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mansfield has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested. Please contact the undersigned should there be any questions or in order to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

December 18, 2008
Date

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